Harold Weisberg
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Dear Mr. Maltz,

When Victor Navasky's March 25 article, sent me by an editor friend, came today, I could not put it down. The farthur I got into it the more I became aware of emotional rection. I write as soon as I finished the piece, still under the influence of my reaction to it and some of the quotes and opinions in it.

I am a part of that history only one of you knew. Through him I became one of the unknown victims of it. Earlier and later I had my own similar experiences, with the same committee and with others. In one of these I also had experience of my own with the man who was your lawyer and had been my friend.

If nothing else prompted this letter, the Dalton Trumbo quote on not insulting finks would, for I think by any rational standard he insulted me in not answering a letter I write him February 15 recounting part of this history. I also wrote him about a month ago after seeing some publicity on the film he is writing, when I feared he was getting himself into something he did not really understand and would wind up seriously compromising his personal integrity and corrupting history with it. Since then the little doubt I had has been resolved by learning the identity of his collaborator. He is a man I know as a literary thief and a commercializer of principle. More, he justifies literary thievery as proper. What can be Trumbo's current ethical standards if he would hestitate to give what could be taken as insult by finks and he can't find time to acknowledge the letter of a man who suffered from trying to help him when he certainly needed help in the past and then offers the same in the present?

Before recounting the history you do not know, let me also tell you that I told Trumbo, in effect, that there is a current blacklist, that I am on it, and that I have socially-useful properties with good commercial prospect I would like to share and, if nothing else were possible, would give away. I am as close as one can be to unpublishable. In addition to my other "crimes", I invented the underground book. If this is not enough to bring down curses, well, I've sued the Justice Department and the FBI - successfully - have the FBI in court right now, and if I can obtain counsel, will be suing the CIA, some of whose surveillance of me I have. I realize how paranoid all this sounds. I can promise that if it means anything to you, I'll send you copies of the proceedings. Ask your own lawyer how common a Summary Judgement against the Department of Justice is. I can send you a copy of the one I won in federal court.

I knew Marty Popper through Vito Marcantonio, who was so close a friend he lived with me for several years, in Washington. Marty was not in touch with me when the ten of you were before the UnAmericans. Dmytryk came to my home one night with a man with whom in the last half of the 1930s I had been a Senate investigator. This man knew I had been investigating the UnAmericans and planned a book on that investigation. They left with the guts of that book. I have never heard from either since, nor has a single paper of the boxes of material they took ever been returned. So, I don't have the book. It would have been like no other, for I had the official records of every cent the committee had spent. This was before the day of xeroxes. I kept a crew of three typists busy for 20 or so days just typing the official records. (At the same time I got Father Coughlin's accounting of his income and expenditures and gave that to Jack Spivack, if you remember his book.)

I was then a young man. As you know, generally the older will not listen to the younger. I think if you had fought the UnAmericans as I had, you'd not have faced or gone to jail. They passed a law to get me, held up the appointment of the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia to be a federal judge to get him in the right state of dedication, convoked a grand jury to help the endeavor, and then leaked what was

going on in the grand jury room to an associate to get him to lean on me. In the end the UnAmecican agent was indicted and I was not. Martin Dies copped a plea for him and he got a two-year sentence, without trial and the attendant publicity. Dave Pine became a federal judge. And I gave Dmytryk enough to get Martin Dies convicted as a common crook, as his sucessor, J. Parnell (Feeney) Thomas was. (Did you know that Thomas was the gift to Congress of the bond house whose dominant figure had tried to promote a white-horse led march on Washington to overthrow the government during the depression?)

There is another "10" of whom I was one - nine Jews and a case of mistaken identity. We were all summarily fired by the State Department, for no given reason. There was such a law, one of the McCarran Acts. They could do it and they did, at the behest of anti-Semites who then controlled the House Appropriations Committee. George Marshall, you may remember, was a great Secretary of State. My fellow victims were all ivory-tower type intellectuals. None wanted to fight. After I heated them up to where they would, as a group, I sought counsel for us. Having known Marty, gotten drunk with him, driven him around and things like that, and knowing the avowed principles of the National Lawyers' Guild, in which he was then the honcho, I went to Marty. Sure, he'd represent us. Only before we did anything he'd need $5,000 in cash, on the line. Now we were ordinary working stiffs not in denims. Most of us were fresh from the Army. Maybe we could have raised the money, but I wouldn't try. The late Thurman Arnold, aided by his partner, Abe Fortas, took the case free, on principle. We won, too. If getting re-instated and allowed to resign was victory. For those days I feel it was. The way we fought we didn t get as far as court, and a reporter won a Pulitzer Prize for his part. That was the last time I saw Marty. It helps me understand why you didn t fight as I had and why several Constitutional provisions besides the First Amendment were not part of your defense.

It is not only that one fights, it is how one fights. The UnAmericans came for me before TV. However, they did not dare have a public hearing, did not dare have radio there, and to this day have not dared print my testimony in several executive sessions. However, getting the UnAmerican agent convicted didn't really impede them. I also got proof that they had plagiarized an entire report from an obscure newsletter, word for word, faithful to every gramatical and typographical error. All that means is that the votes against the committee were increased to perhaps 15% of the House, from less than 10%. I gave this to Marcantonio, who made a truly memorable, extemporaneous speech on the floor, the first "I-hold-in-my-hand" speech of the era. He read first from the UnAmerican Report and then from this newsletter. It was dramatic, exciting and futile. I am, in this digression, addressing your opinion "if we had won the McCarthy era would not have occurred". My own perhaps pessimistic view is that because the committee served the needs of an Ameriform fascism, as did McCarthy, neither you nor anything could have stopped it or the early McCarthy.

Navasky mentions Ian Hunter. He and I were soldiers together in OSS, with other Hollywood personalities. If I may inject an effort at humor, I was the only proletarian in our shop. I alone had had basic military training. Dick Wilson, our first sergeant, didn't even know what the commands meant. While I was there, until I got a medical discharge and was rehired as a civilian, we had one military formation. Dick stationed me in front of him, so I could translate into the English Hollywood types could understand what each command meant. He then told the rest what to do. Despite this, it was a Chaplinesque fiasco.

Here I intend more than an attempt at a joke. I don't know how clear Ian's recollections are. I am addressing whether I can make credible assessments of the commercially viable. This is one of the things about which, given my circumstances, I wrote Trumbo. Before discharge from the Army and rehiring for a different expertise, on Nazi cartels, in a different shop, the last thing I did subsequently appeared as the movie in which Jimmy Cagney starred, "O.S.S.". I do not think and I am not suggesting that Ian cribbed it. Another of that period was the movie "Gung Ho!" It is I who resurrected Evans

Fordyce Carlson from literary oblivion. I got $100 for the story from which the movie was taken. I don't think experience has diminished the judgement this reflects, if should you know those who might be interested in what I think could be worthwhile projects. One of many would, I think, make a new and in some topical ways more significant "Citizen Kane".

There is another way in which the paths of principled Hollywoodians and my own crossed. Navasky's reference to Edward G. Robinson reminds me of it. He starred in Warner's "Confessions of a Nazi Spy." This is the story of how the pro-Nazi Senate "investigation" of the movie industry was killed.

Warner hired a New Yorker, Wellington Roe, to promote the movie. I met Roe at the New York Newspaper Guild bar/meeting place when I was free-lancing. The man who introduced us, an editor of the Guild Reporter, told him I was fairly well connected in the Senate. He knew me from when I was a Senate editor. For such a movie, naturally I was willing to help. The late Senator Gerald Nye, who I knew, had a bill pending that could have been helped by the movie. So, when I proposed it to Nye, he agreed to arrange and sponsor a private, official showing of the movie before release in the Department of Labor auditorium. That was before we got into the war.

Nye, Warner and everyone else forgot this when after we were in the war Nye had his "investigation" going. When he singled out this movie as what to him was a horrible example of "war propaganda" I was less shocked by that than by the fact that nobody remembered. When this became clear, I reminded Frank La Falce, Warner's Washington flack, he told Harry Warner, Harry told Nye to his face, at the hearings, and that investigation ended on the spot.

Of course, I have no way of knowing what if any of this ancient history interests you or any of your fellow victims. There seems to be a renewed public and publishing interest in that period of our national shame. You, all of whom were successful and established, suffered real pain. However, there were others, not successful in the sense that they had great reputations or financial resources, whose suffering was no less great, if not greater, and who have not been able to recover, in any financial sense. One who followed you, Cedric Belfrage, has a book about to appear dealing with it. He is still in Mexican exile. I heard from him only last week. As a result of large but silent protest he is being admitted to the U.S. for 30 days.

Trumbo has been a major disillusionment for me. I know and continue to respect his non-movie work. To me, when he says the finks were equally victimized it is like saying that when a crazy driver wrecks a car and suffered a bruised toe, he is equally the victim of his own reckless act as the passenger who is crippled for life.

If in his day Marcantonio was a radical, unchanged, today, he would not be. No more are the things you and your fellows suffered for saying, thinking and doing. Those things can now be sold, for they are accepted. Thus, today, the people can consider them and the country is better for it. But the people also need new information, as they need the repetition of the old. So do the younger people, who are not familiar with what today is this old. How I wish that those who had been stifled in the past had set themselves to seeing that ideas would not be repressed in the future!

Best wishes,

Harold Weisberg